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To: <pubworks@parliament.nsw.gov.au>
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Subject: Coastal Growth

**Submission
No 6**

Dear Sir/ Madam

To grasp the interactions inherent in processes of coastal population/ urban growth and plan for their management requires:-

A philosophical stance that the coast is part of 'natures bounty' and as such belongs to all Australians for whom it is a big part of their self-image and of the Australian identity overseas.

A strategic context recognising the realities of 'peak oil' and scenarios realistically based on escalating energy costs particularly for transport.

A car-based transport system is not an option given the growth forecasts (population and trip-generation). Serious long-term and creative thought needs to flow from this plan to avert repeating up and down the coast the transport disaster that is Sydney. Public transport, based on higher development densities and smart urban design, is the only long-term option and the plan needs to focus on how we manage the modal shift from the beloved, individualistic, status-projecting, control-conferring, private car. Yes, it will be a challenge but not so great a challenge as the alternative of gridlock or cars priced-out of use for those coast-dwellers on fixed incomes as petrol prices rise. The plan needs to sound a serious wake-up call to politicians that a 4-year electoral time-horizon is totally inappropriate in the face of these challenges as is massive government budget surpluses given the lead-time involved in the necessary massive modal-shift to sustainable forms of transport. Perhaps only in the NSW coastal zone can visitor spending contribute to local transport patronage and viability.

Acknowledging that the coastal zone is a State resource contributing to a tourism export industry that eclipses the value of coal, steel and many other sunset industries which get excessive government attention in relation to their national net worth/ contribution to the economy and unsustainability.

A vigorous push away from political short-termism or 'just knocking-over the easy skittles'. The required infrastructure investments need at least 20-year time horizons and capital works programs eg. as used by Hunter Water for its investments, for railway infrastructure and transport interchanges etc..

A policy stance that green spaces are good for biodiversity, for recreation, for human health and for the distinctiveness of urban areas- as opposed to a coalescence of settlement into a coastal megalopolis that will strangle the golden goose of international and domestic tourism.

Acknowledgement that it is quite legitimate, and not somehow shamefully unmasculine, to reserve natural areas for their aesthetic/ scenic contribution to recreation and tourism regardless of past justifications (still persisting in LEP's etc.) that the land may be needed for food production. In the EC, 'food mountain' and 'wine lake' surpluses have forced a shift in planning thought away from the old post-war justifications based on the protection of productive food-growing agricultural land and toward assessments of the contributions these green spaces or natural areas make in the new economy in terms of scenery, habitat, environment, and even the human spirit (as in the original meaning of 're-creation' which has since morphed into meaning 'sport'). Any plan is suspect if it cannot acknowledge that some areas/ environments need conserving for their intrinsic and natural values ie. it is not the natural destiny of every piece of coastal land to be developed. The obsession with 'prime residential real-estate' needs tempering by the coastal plan with readers perceptions sharpened to the natural,

environmental, cultural and scenic values and hence to the 'new spiritual economy' potential of coastal areas managed with minimal intervention beyond areas requiring rehabilitation.

Balancing the push for the development of coastal 'activities' with the human need for places of passivity within easy reach of home ie. it is unsustainable if planning cannot offer residents a dozen coastal places of differing character within a short travel time of home. Such new standards need enshrining in coastal plans as they are central to Australian life (see

Strategies to retain the continuity of the coastal zone and the coastal experience both for its habitat and its tourism and its sustainable transport eg. coastal shareway benefits eg. Milford Track, NZ; South Downs Walk, UK; Lyke Wake Walk, UK; Pembrokeshire Coast Footpath UK; Bronte to Bondi walk, NSW (down to 0.5m wide in some places, not universally accessible and highly urbanised/ overlooked- not recommended aspects). While your plan focuses outside the metropolitan area there are lessons along that urban coast- which was once non-urban coastline. Careful study of cases where the coastal zone has been mismanaged such that these lessons are analysed and well-learned through articulation in this plan so as not to be repeated in the plan eg. Queensland's Gold Coast, the Woy Woy Peninsula, the North Coast around Yamba, Jimmys Beach and Windawoppa dune erosion at Port Stephens etc.. The public and tourism opportunity costs of such mismanagement need to be understood, measured (however broadly), and policies put in place to monitor the coastal plan's policy impacts, impacts from development and impacts from environmental change. The NSW planning system is weak on scientific validation of plan impacts and on environmental change within areas subject to the plan. Monitoring stations for measuring environmental quality, dune erosion, water quality, micro-climatical change etc. can and should be specified, costed and included in a Section 94 contribution or other reliable funding mechanisms as an integral part of this coastal plan. There then needs to be a commitment to a plan review every few years on the basis of that monitoring.

Acknowledgement that the planning system is not there to 'fix-up' developments which are fundamentally bad in principle and concept. We see this in many rural areas where the impacts of the 'fix' are so serious that the quality of the resulting environment is seriously compromised eg. clearance for bushfire hazard reduction, engineering structures to retain/ stabilise slopes, provide 'safe' access or mooring or parking or swimming pool, or home with 'great ocean views'. In focusing on fixing-up the private problems of the individual, the participants in all levels of government lose sight of the outcome in terms of the broader public interest- 'sustainable economic interest' if this is a more comfortable expression eg. lost coastal access, scenery, recreational/ tourism potential, compromised habitat or coastal processes, water quality, air quality, ambience/ amenity etc..

Coastal LEP's need to be required to seek scientifically-based environmental impact assessments of coastal developments as well as simply placing some areas off-limits on the basis of their Aboriginal, European or natural heritage values, passive tourism potential etc.. Even though rezoning is non-appellable, coastal councils, keen for revenue, seem incapable of saying 'no'. This parochial view is selling-off the NSW community's birthright for smallscale local gains in rates etc.. Good low-impact accessibility for walkers, cyclists, disabled people can easily justify preserving a green coastal zone free from built development. Mechanisms to stop or put the brakes on the coastal land-grab fuelled by parochialism in small councils under pressure to provide services beyond their capacity. Cost-recovery mechanisms are needed based on realistic long-run costs to government agencies at all levels in servicing coastal developments where these are acceptable. Allied to this approach is the identification of mechanisms for cost-recovery from inclusive/ publicly

accessible developments eg. cafe/ kiosk leases or local town improvement rating of commercial developments adjacent to the coastal zone to which the coastal zone value-adds eg. nearby walking trail, uninterrupted ocean views from outdoor dining areas etc.. as well as local councils being compensated by State revenue for forgoing the development of 'their coastal strip' for the wider State benefits from tourism, for habitat etc. eg. via enhanced tourism/ recreation/ arts promotion and development grants from NSWG. This would also be very consistent with obesity/ active lifestyles preventive health programs. 'Sculpture-by-the-sea' type programs could also be a popular part of a targeted compensatory package channelled through local stakeholders' value-adding programs. An umbrella 'Creative Coast' program could span the activities and policies of NSWG agencies in Arts, Health, Sport and Recreation and Tourism- with significantly boosted funding which is not diverted from existing programs.

An emphasis on community-access to the coast through any developments permitted there ie. dedications of land to public open space, public/ inclusive uses in preference to private/ exclusive development and negotiated/ mandated publicly accessible spaces and corridors within/ through any developments on already subdivided or developed land as conditions of subdivision/ development consent. New development agreements legislation broaden the scope for creative access mechanisms.

The above are regarded as minimal contents of any coastal plan. Above all, in the coastal zone moreso than anywhere else, there needs to be a shift in planning thinking towards the collective and the public interest and away from the individualistic/ real estate values which have derailed much of NSW planning. We can all dream ourselves into 270 degree ocean-view residences- but a very small proportion of our population could ever realise such a dream. With this in mind we need planning for maximum public access and coastal conservation.

Once privatised we are all effectively locked-out of our NSW coastline forever whereas with prudent resource management it can work sustainably to create wealth, in its broadest sense, for all with minimal intervention/ public investment.

This is a personal professional view based on 32 years in all types of urban and regional planning practice in the UK and NSW.
I hope that my time and thought will not have been wasted here.

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